

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, undated, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. My dear Alec:

I feel troubled about Bert and Elsie. I think it extremely unwise to have any financial dealings with the members of one's family and I would like them to understand from the beginning that they must dree their own weird alone and not come to us for help when they outstrip their income. On the other hand it is perfectly true that they built a larger and more expensive house than Bert would have vested on because you strongly advised it. You know Bert was going to tell the architect that he must cut down the estimates when you interposed. So that I feel as if we were really bound to help them in the troubles brought on by the need of locking up so much of their capital in the house.

It seems that they have paid all on their house except \$3500.00 which is due on the land. The land was \$7,500.00 and they sold Elsie's Georgetown houses and with the proceeds they paid off \$4,000.00 and took a mortgage on the rest in an insurance Company. They want now to clear it and relieve themselves of the necessity of paying interest by selling their \$2,000.00 Penna. Telephone shares. They must sell because the Insurance Co. will only receive bonds and mortgages, not stock. Then they subscribed for their Bell Telephone rights last summer and can't pay for them all except by selling other stock at a loss. They think if they could hold on to the Bell Telephone (Am: Tel. and Tel. Co.) till April the price will have gone up enough to enable them to sell part of 2 their new shares and pay for the other part and clear the rest of the mortgage.

Bert wants us to take his Penna. Tel. Co. stock off his hands if they can't sell it otherwise and also to let him have \$1200. to cover the Am. Tel. and Tel. Co. rights payment, on the understanding that he will return the money on the sale of stock in April or that if I

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want the money before he will sell his stock at 24 hours' notice. This is all very well, but it would be ungracious if I did ask him to sell. Now in one way I would feel that he was trying to make as much money as possible on the one hand and on the other that we had given them enough and they must just learn how to suit their expenditure to their income without feeling that they can always come to us. On the other however is my feeling that we do owe them something for making them build a bigger house than they would have done alone. What do you say to our taking up that mortgage for them and then telling them decidedly that we think that we have done enough and that they must get along by themselves? We should have to sell our stock to take it up, but after all they have done pretty well if as I understand they have paid all but \$3500.00 on their house which cost \$16000.00 and their ground at \$7500.00 and reduced their income but slightly.

Please telegraph me at once as I fancy Bert will have to sell his Am. Tel and Tel. Stock very shortly if you do not want to help him. My feeling is against doing anything about this, it is in the nature of speculation, but I would like to help the children about the house. It would mean something to them to save the income of that \$3500.00 and put us in a better position to refuse other money dealings. For then 3 their house will have cost them no more than Bert thought they could afford originally.

Lovingly, Mabel.